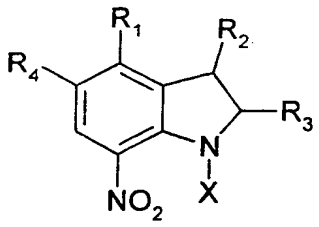
Claims:

1. A compound represented by the structural formula:



wherein

R_1 is hydrogen;

C_{1-10} alkyl or substituted alkyl;

$O(CH_2)_n-Y$;

$N(COZ)(CH_2)_mY$; or

$N[(CH_2)_mX][(CH_2)_nY]$;

R_2 and R_3 are independently selected from:

hydrogen;

C_{1-10} alkyl or substituted alkyl; or

R_2 and R_3 together are cycloalkyl;

R_4 is hydrogen;

C_{1-10} alkyl or substituted alkyl;

phenyl or substituted phenyl;

$(CH_2)_nY$; or

$(CH_2)_mO(CH_2)_nY$;

wherein:

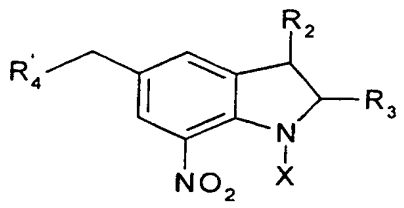
m and n are independently between 1 and 10;

X and Y are independently selected from hydrogen, CO_2H or salts thereof or OPO_3^{2-};

Z is hydrogen or C_{1-10} alkyl or substituted alkyl; and,

X is an effector moiety or a group capable of being coupled or converted to an effector moeity.

2. The compound of claim 1 represented by the structural formula:



wherein

R_2 and R_3 are independently selected from hydrogen, C_{1-10} alkyl or substituted alkyl, or R_2 and R_3 together are cycloalkyl;

R_4' is a blocking group; and,

X is an effector moiety.

3. The compound of claim 2, wherein R_4' is selected from:

hydrogen;

C_{1-10} alkyl or substituted alkyl;

phenyl or substituted phenyl;

$(CH_2)_nCO_2Y$; and,

$(CH_2)_n-O-(CH_2)_mY$;

wherein:

m and n are independently between 0 and 10; and,

Y is hydrogen, or C_{1-10} alkyl or substituted alkyl.

4. The compound of claim 1 or claim 2 which is:

Methyl 1-glutaryl-7-nitroindoline-5-acetate **8**;

Methyl 1-[(5-dihydroxyphosphoryloxy)pentanoyl)]-7-nitroindoline-5-acetate **9**;

Methyl 1-[*S*-(4-amino-4-carboxybutanoyl)]-7-nitroindoline-5-acetate **10**;

Methyl 1-(4-aminobutanoyl)-7-nitroindoline-5-acetate **21**;

Methyl 1-acetyl-7-nitroindoline-5-acetate **16**;

Mono[1-(5-methoxycarbonylmethyl-7-nitroindolyl)] amide of 1,2-bis(*O*-aminophenoxy)ethane-*N,N,N',N'*-tetraacetic acid;
1-Acetyl-4-methoxy-7-nitroindoline **25**;
1-Acetyl-4-methoxy-5-methyl-7-nitroindoline **25**;
1-[*S*-(4-Amino-4-carboxybutanoyl)]-4-methoxy-7-nitroindoline;
1-(4-Aminobutanoyl)-4-methoxy-7-nitroindoline;
1-[(5-Dihydroxyphosphoryloxy)pentanoyl)]-4-methoxy-7-nitroindoline;
Mono[1-(4-methoxy-7-nitroindolyl)] amide of 1,2-bis(*O*-aminophenoxy)ethane-*N,N,N',N'*-tetraacetic acid;
1-[*S*-(4-Amino-4-carboxybutanoyl)]-4-methoxy-5-methyl-7-nitroindoline;
1-(4-Aminobutanoyl)-4-methoxy-5-methyl-7-nitroindoline;
1-[(5-Dihydroxyphosphoryloxy)pentanoyl)]-4-methoxy-5-methyl-7-nitroindoline; or,
Mono[1-(4-methoxy-5-methyl-7-nitroindolyl)] amide of 1,2-bis(*O*-aminophenoxy)ethane-*N,N,N',N'*-tetraacetic acid.

5. The compound of any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the effector moiety X is a label, a drug, a toxin, or a carrier or transport molecule.

6. The compound of any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the effector moiety is an amino acid, a peptide or a polypeptide.

7. The compound of claim 6, wherein the effector moiety is a neuroactive amino acid such as L-glutamate, GABA and glycine.

8. The compound of claim 7, wherein the effector moiety is thyrotrophin releasing hormone, an enkephalin, bradykinin or and angiotensin II.

9. The compound of any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the effector moiety is metal ion chelator capable of release on photolysis to bind metal ions.

10. The compound of claim 9, wherein the metal ion chelator is EDTA, BAPTA or EGTA.

11. A compound of any one of claims 1 to 10 for use in a method of medical treatment.

12. A compound of any one of claims 1 to 10 for the preparation of a medicament for the treatment of a condition which responds to the effector moiety.

13. A composition comprising a compound of any one of claims 1 to 10.

14. A process for releasing an effector moiety, the process comprising irradiating a photoreleasable compound of any one of claims 1 to 10 to cause the release of the effector moiety.

15. A process for producing a compound of any one of claims 1 to 10, the process comprising:

(a) reacting indoline or a derivatised indoline to substitute a blocking group at the 5-position;

(b) reacting the indoline compound of step (a) to couple an effector moiety at the heterocyclic nitrogen, the effector group having a protecting group; and,

(c) nitrating the indoline compound of step (b) at the 7-position to produce said compound.

16. A process for purifying a compound of any one of claims 1 to 10, the process comprising:

(a) eluting the compound from a HPLC column using aqueous methanol containing buffer salts;

(b) desalting fractions containing the compound obtained from step (a) on Amberlite XAD-2 resin; and,

(c) eluting the resin with methanol to recover the compound.